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**Education Committee**

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**HB 2910**

**Brief Description:** Requiring a study of environmental education.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Quall, Talcott, P. Sullivan, Shabro, Santos, Hunt, Anderson and Kenney.

**Brief Summary of Bill**

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, by October 1, 2007, to conduct an environmental education study to provide findings and recommendations useful in developing the Washington state comprehensive environmental education plan.

**Hearing Date:** 1/25/06

**Staff:** Barbara McLain (786-7383).

**Background:**

Environmental education teaches about science, conservation, and natural resources with an emphasis on solving the problems of human adaptation to the environment.

In addition to instruction provided in schools, many organizations and agencies offer environmental education programs: nature centers, zoos, aquariums, city and county departments of parks and recreation, non-profit organizations such as the Audubon Society and the Sierra Club, and state agencies such as the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Department of Natural Resources. The Environmental Education Association of Washington (EEAW) is a statewide non-profit organization of educators that offers training, materials, and advocacy for high quality environmental education.

In 2005, the EEAW received a grant from a private foundation to develop a comprehensive environmental education plan for Washington. The EEAW intends that the comprehensive plan incorporate any available research on how environmental education promotes career exploration for students, can be used to meet graduation requirements, or assists underserved youth.

**Summary of Bill:**

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must conduct an environmental education study in partnership with public and private entities that promote quality environmental education experiences. The study must provide empirical evidence, exemplary models, and recommendations about career development, service learning, graduation requirements,

underserved youth, and professional development for community-based service organizations or state and local agencies. The study provides findings and recommendations useful to the Washington state comprehensive environmental education plan, a public-private endeavor intended to ensure quality outdoor environmental education opportunities for every student, family, and community in Washington.

The OSPI provides an interim update to the Legislature by December 1, 2006, and must complete the study no later than October 1, 2007.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Requested on January 18, 2006.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.